

Postal clerks race to Anthony dollar rescue

By Roger Boye

MOST PUNDITS have been writing off the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin as just one more government flop.

"They're moving like green weenies," wrote one columnist. "The Susan B. Edsel is about as popular as the Ayatollah Khomeini."

The coin even won the Bonehead Award from a group of Dallas businessmen.

But it now appears that the Anthony dollar is garnering some small measure of public acceptance, thanks to the work of United States postal clerks who have been using the coin — rather than the \$1 bill — to make change.

During February, the first month of the Postal Service "distribution," Federal Reserve banks doled out at least 7 million Anthony dollars to commercial banks.

The news cheered government experts who have insisted for months that the Anthony dollar eventually will become an integral part of the coinage system, despite the fact that the coin is almost the size of a quarter. As Mint director Stella B. Hackel told a Coin World reporter, "We anticipated that it would take three or four years

for the American people to become accustomed to the dollar."

Treasury officials are now mulling over other ways to encourage the use of the coin, including a national public service advertising campaign. More promotion is needed, of course, since nearly two-thirds of the 800 million dollars minted so far are being stored in vaults, waiting to be used. The backlog is so great that the government will temporarily suspend production of the coin starting April 1.

Meanwhile, Washington bureaucrats aren't getting much help in their circulation efforts from gamblers in Atlantic City. Slot machines that accept the larger Eisenhower dollars (minted from 1971 to 1978) have been more popular than machines using the Anthony coin, and some casino operators reportedly are experimenting with new 50-cent slot machines.

NEARLY 20 coin dealers will be doing business from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. next Sunday at the Lake County Coin Club's annual show at the Swedish Glee Club, 621 Belvidere St., Waukegan. Admission is free, and door prizes will be given every half-hour, said club president Alan Zimmer.